

## Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 92

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17—Relative to human services.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 2, 1997.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 17, Watson. Foster care.

This measure would request the State Department of Social Services to seek the input of foster youth across the state to advise the department on approaches to improving the foster care system. This measure would encourage the department, in consultation with county independent living programs, to identify methods of making transitional housing services available to an increased number of foster youth.

WHEREAS, The California Youth Connection, a statewide organization of youth in the foster care system, has written the "Foster Youth Bill of Rights," that addresses the rights and responsibilities of foster youth who must live in group homes and institutions, foster care, and court-ordered relative placements; and

WHEREAS, These rights and responsibilities are as follows:

- (1) The right to be treated with respect.
- (2) The right to adequate living conditions and a home-like environment.
- (3) The right to adequate medical, dental, and psychiatric care.
- (4) The right to fair treatment in administering rewards and punishments.
- (5) The right to contact family members, social workers, attorneys, and other adult supporters.
- (6) The right to education and community involvement.
- (7) The right to work and develop job skills.
- (8) The right to social contacts.
- (9) The right to adequate clothing.
- (10) The right to a reasonable allowance.
- (11) The right to receive emancipation services through a formal independent living program provided by the State Department of Social Services.
- (12) The responsibility for involvement in a full-time educational or job training program leading to a high school or general educational development certificate (GED).
- (13) The responsibility to be actively involved in preparation for emancipation by any of the following:
  - (A) Working on an individual emancipation plan.

(B) Attending independent living program training.

(C) Participating in a transitional living program.

(14) The responsibility to open and maintain an emancipation savings account.

(15) The responsibility to respect the person and property of the other members of the family, the care providers, or residential staff with whom they reside.

(16) The responsibility to make contact at least every three months with either a placement worker, an independent living program staff person, or an emancipation assistant for the county that placed the foster youth.

(17) The responsibility to keep his or her care provider, social worker, and counselors informed about current needs or problems affecting the foster youth; and

WHEREAS, It is the goal of the Legislature that all youth upon leaving the child welfare and foster care systems have a means of support, a suitable place to live, necessary medical care, clothing, educational opportunities, a vocational plan, educational records, and medical records; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Legislature that the state coordinate resources so that every foster child in long-term out-of-home placement over the age of 16 years shall have access to an independent living program and be provided with an individual emancipation plan; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Legislature that the State Department of Social Services will ensure that the priorities for every independent living program provided at the local level pursuant to the independent living program established pursuant to the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-272) shall be to assist emancipating foster youth with a place to live, a source of income adequate to maintain basic needs, and placement in a job, job training program, or program of higher education; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Legislature that, to the degree independent living programs are available, the county department of social services will ensure that every foster youth 16 years of age or older who is in out-of-home placement under the supervision of the county department of social services or the county probation department is referred to an independent living program in the region or area of the foster youth's out-of-home placement; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature finds and declares that adequate job training and preparation for emancipation are essential to the personal development of youth in the foster care system and to the productivity of emancipated foster youth; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Legislature that state, county, and local governments be encouraged to recruit and employ qualified foster children over the age of 16 years and to work with

other local agencies and private employers to arrange job opportunities for foster children; and

WHEREAS, It is the further intent of the Legislature that foster youth receive priority in all federally funded and state-funded youth employment programs intended for at-risk youth; and

WHEREAS, Learning the skills of self-control, responsibility, and problem solving are important to the development of foster children and foster parents; and

WHEREAS, Social services personnel and community care facilities play an important role in helping foster children learn these skills; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Legislature that foster parents and community care facilities assist foster children in learning emancipation skills and assist foster youth in preparation for emancipation; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Legislature that emancipation alone should not render foster youth homeless; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature hereby finds and declares that policy decisions made by the Legislature, the State Department of Social Services, and counties affect the lives of children in out-of-home care; and

WHEREAS, Foster children should have a voice in the policymaking process; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the State Department of Social Services is requested to seek the input of foster youth across the state, including those from the California Youth Connection and independent living programs, to advise the department on approaches to improving the foster care system including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- (1) Family visitation.
- (2) Employment opportunities and job training.
- (3) Clothing and personal allowances.
- (4) Discipline in group homes.
- (5) Creating a home-like environment in group homes.
- (6) Access to extracurricular activities for foster children.
- (7) Emancipation services and support.

(8) Additional methods of social services that ensure assistance to wards or dependents of the juvenile court who are preparing to emancipate pursuant to Part 6 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 11 of the Family Code, with meeting their housing, medical, vocational, and income needs after emancipation or termination of foster care eligibility; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the State Department of Social Services, in consultation with county independent living programs, is encouraged to identify methods of making transitional housing services available to an increased number of foster youth; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Director of Social Services.

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